**Resident Design Assistant (Paid Training Programme)**

**Job Description**

**Role Summary**

We are delighted to have received new funding for a full-time, two-year Resident Design Assistant training position; the funding aims to support artists and organisations who are seeking to recover following the impact of COVID-19 on UK theatre.

We are seeking candidates who are in the early stages of a career in theatre design and are keen to gain professional experience alongside their ongoing personal artistic development.

The aim of this training post is to offer you the opportunity to develop an understanding of how a theatre venue and its technical and producing departments run, and to further build on and consolidate your skills and experience as a designer.

This role is a funded trainee position because we seek to nurture and support emerging talent into creative backstage theatre roles. The Unicorn is also seeking a second placement for a Deputy Production Manager trainee for the same period.

The ideal candidate will likely have around two years’ of experience working as a designer, or as an assistant designer, in a professional and/or fringe theatre context, have an understanding and knowledge of theatre production processes, or have recently graduated from a relevant BA or MA course in design. We are looking for people with the potential to grow and who would welcome the training and support this opportunity offers.

We are committed to being an equal opportunities employer and actively encourage people from a wide variety of backgrounds, experience and skills to join us and influence and develop our working practice. We particularly encourage applications from Black candidates, candidates from diverse ethnic backgrounds, and disabled candidates.

All candidates who identify as disabled and demonstrate that they meet the essential criteria will be invited for an interview, in line with the Equalities Act 2010.

**Responsible to:** Producer

**Working closely with:** Technical & Production Director, Senior Producer, Freelance Creatives, Artistic Director, Senior Management Team, Technical Team

**Summary**

The Resident Assistant Designer is responsible to the Producer, and works closely with the in house technical team and freelance creative teams. The role combines practical, artistic and administrative elements alongside additional training, mentoring and the opportunity to independently design at least one Unicorn production in year two of the programme.

This role is fixed term and offered on a full-time basis, however hours will be scheduled alongside production periods and freelance opportunities may be taken alongside the role, subject to the Unicorn’s production schedule.

The Resident Design Assistant will be part of all the artistic activity at the Unicorn, including: 8 - 10 productions each year in the studio and main-house theatres, from digital projects, in-house shows and co-productions to visiting company work and touring. There is also the opportunity to work across the organisation to gain understanding and insight into the operations of a busy producing venue, including facilities management, technical, governance, strategy, programming, and engagement.

**Key responsibilities**

* Supporting the Production department in delivering shows including design of set and costume elements of Unicorn productions in the main-house and studio theatres including preparation, delivery and execution.
* Undertaking research prior to rehearsal as required.
* Assisting freelance designers on Unicorn productions. This may include model making, technical drawing, either at the Unicorn or in the designer's studio and attending meetings with Unicorn production management. (It is not essential that the candidate is highly skilled in all areas and the role will be tailored to the strengths of the candidate and we will help develop those areas in which they may have less experience.)
* Assisting on fabric sampling and costume buying
* Attending costume fittings where appropriate
* Attending rehearsals at the discretion of the Director
* Attending and supporting production meetings and model showings
* As required, attending previews of the Unicorn’s work as part of the extended creative team
* Attend internal and external readings, sharings and workshops
* Attend and participate in Engagement events, projects and workshops as required as part of the Unicorn’s co-creation strategy working in partnership with schools and community groups.
* Assisting on Front of house and other general design projects
* Attend regular programming meetings including script reading.
* Join occasional senior team and board meetings as appropriate for strategy sessions.
* Attend all company annual ‘away-days’, press nights and development events as reasonably required.
* See work in the UK as required (ticket and travel costs beyond London covered by the Unicorn).
* Support the Unicorn’s artist and talent development initiatives on a strategic level, including attending Freelancer forum sessions.
* Attend and become an active member of internal sub-committee working groups: Health & Safety, Sustainability, IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equality, Access).
* Adhere to Health & Safety rules, and industry legislation and standards, including the Unicorn Safeguarding Policy and Data Protection Policy, and to be mindful of the theatre’s commitment to Equal Opportunities.

*This list of responsibilities is not exhaustive and you may be required to perform duties outside of this as operationally required and at the discretion of your line manager.*

**Training and Development**

**Mentoring**

The Resident Design Assistant will be line managed by the Producer.

They will also be appointed a paid mentor for the duration of the contract. Mentoring will be scheduled on a regular basis, alongside appraisal opportunities at 6 monthly intervals and an evaluation moment on completion with your line manager and mentor.

You will also have the opportunity to be mentored by some of the freelance designers working on Unicorn productions.

A training budget will be allocated based on agreed priorities for the placement.

**Sustainability**

You will undertake Carbon Literacy training, and individual training and mentorship in creating sustainable productions.

The post-holder will uphold the Unicorn’s commitment to sustainability across our building and productions, ensuring that the Unicorn remains a leader in industry best practice, and embed Theatre Green Book standards across productions.

**Accessibility**

You will undertake Disability Awareness training, and learn about creative access approaches with a show, and have the opportunity to work with colleagues to further improve the organisation’s work around access and inclusion.

**Co-Creative Processes**

You will have opportunities to take part in community and school Engagement projects where aspects of a show are developed with young people over a series of sessions. You will gain insights into how co-creative processes can work, and how to embed this into your own creative practice.

**Person Specification**

**Essential experience**:

* Two years recent, equivalent practical experience in a professional and/or fringe theatre context

OR

* A recent BA or MA in theatre, costume or performance design

**Essential approach:**

* A passion for theatre and commitment to building a career in the arts.
* An understanding of and interest in the artistic vision of the Unicorn and its work.
* Organised with ability to deliver to deadlines.
* Ability to work effectively under pressure.
* Knowledge of how to work to budget and creatively problem-solve.
* The discretion, sensitivity, interpersonal and communication skills to be able to work effectively with a wide range of freelance artists, production teams, and staff across artistic projects.
* Interest in and knowledge of sustainability and accessibility issues and a commitment to improving and implementing good practice across productions.
* A willingness to work flexible hours and travel occasionally.
* A commitment to diversity and equality of opportunity.

**About the Unicorn**

***We create new, inventive and enthralling performances for every stage of childhood. We believe in the imaginative power of theatre to transform young lives.***

We are the largest children’s theatre in the UK, specialising in developing new devised and written shows alongside adaptations of classic texts, offering an innovative and inspiring year-round programme of sector-leading theatre for children.

Our purpose-built home at London Bridge (opened in 2005) is a creative and welcoming space designed with and for young people. Our building comprises two theatre spaces (Weston Theatre at around 290-seat capacity and Clore Theatre at around 90-seat capacity) plus two rehearsal spaces, along with backstage set, prop and costume facilities. We produce and present a thrilling and varied programme, exploring stories, ideas and themes that enrich and broaden children’s view of the world. We welcome 65,000 families and schools every year, reaching thousands more via Unicorn Online.

The Unicorn has a turnover of around £2.8 million. In a regular year, over 20% of income comes from Box Office – with almost all tickets being sold to children at concessionary rates – and we raise a similar amount from fundraising.

We believe that young people of all ages, perspectives and abilities have the right to access exciting, entertaining and inspiring work - we want all children to experience our theatre and actively seek out children wouldn’t otherwise attend. The theatre’s audiences are broadly defined as families and schools, and the theatre plays to all ages from six months to 13 years. We maintain a strong commitment to representing diversity in our audiences, as well as on our stages, and we prioritise accessibility and inclusion across our organisation.

During the coronavirus pandemic, we innovated in new forms of digital theatre and are proud to have been able to offer high quality, creative and award-winning online theatre experiences for free. Digital theatre is now a part of our future strategy and firmly embedded in our mission.

**Mission, Vision and Values**

The Unicorn is the UK’s leading theatre for young audiences. We believe that all children deserve to have access to the arts, regardless of their circumstances and our mission is to transform young lives through theatre by:

* Creating innovative and outstanding theatre for children aged up to 13 years.
* Supporting artists to make work with ambition, integrity and hope.
* Encouraging children to question and explore the world through stories; developing empathy, understanding and imagination.
* Collaborating with children in schools and communities to inform our practice, and inspiring children to fulfil their potential through creative projects with inventive theatre-makers.
* Extending our reach through online theatre experiences, national and international partnerships and subsidised tickets.
* Recognising that climate action is vital to protecting children’s futures, and actively reducing our environmental impact on the planet.
* Believing in equality, diversity and inclusion; we take action to advocate for, and promote the rights of children.

Our values are curiosity, courage and respect.

**Structure of the Unicorn**

The Unicorn was founded in 1947 by Caryl Jenner, who took theatre around the country to children. Jenner’s original aim was that: ‘the best of theatre for children should be judged on the same high standards of writing, directing, acting and design as the best of adult theatre’, a value which still holds very much true today. The Unicorn is crucial to the national theatre ecology, and is a beacon for all theatre for children; we are local, national and international in the work we make and the artists we make it with.

The Unicorn has recently undergone a period of extensive change, propelled by the coronavirus pandemic. Under a newly formed Executive team of Justin Audibert (Artistic Director) Helen Tovey and Bailey Lock (Co-Executive Directors), and with the appointment of a new Chair of the Board of Trustees, in March 2021, the Unicorn is emerging as a company with a renewed artistic focus and a vision to transform the lives of young people through theatre.

We are building a community of creative children through our productions, digital experiences and engagement programme. Our work has three core creative outcomes:

* Live Productions: Our live productions on our home and partner stages, created by diverse and exciting artists for children aged 0 -13 years old.
* Digital: Our innovative digital theatre experiences programme *Unicorn Online*, for local, national and global audiences.
* Engagement: Our engagement programme, including co-creation and co-design partnerships, actively develops and supports the individual creative lives of our audiences, participants and collaborators.

**How to Apply**

To apply for this post:

Application Form

Please fill in the Application Form, which includes an Equal Opportunities monitoring form, and email it to jobs@unicorntheatre.com,

Examples of your work

Along with the above, please create and submit a PDF of up to six pages of your portfolio showing examples/images of your work of up to three projects, along with a brief outline of each project (no more than 100 words per project) and email it to jobs@unicorntheatre.com,

**Salary:** £25,000 per annum**,** paid monthly via payroll

**Term:** 24 monthsfixed-term (non-exclusive)

**Contract**: Unicorn staff contracts are based on a 40 hour week, Monday to Friday. For this role, hours will be scheduled around productions, so some weeks may require more hours during technical periods and some weeks will be shorter. Your line manager will work with you to schedule your time.

Freelance opportunities outside the Unicorn that fall during this period will be considered and accommodated where possible on a case by case basis.

We are open to considering applications for flexible working. If you would like to discuss this in advance of submitting an application please contact jobs@unicorntheatre.com.

3 month probationary period.

Annual leave allowance is 25 days, plus 8 statutory Bank Holidays.

Unicorn staff are auto-enrolled into the NEST pension scheme.

**Start date**: October 2022 (ideal but negotiable)

**End date**: Autumn 2024 (date TBC)

**Closing date for applications**: 12pm, Friday 26 August 2022

**First interviews:** w/c 12 September 2022 or w/c 19 September 2022

**Second interviews:** TBC

Because of the nature of this role, we would hope to meet in-person at the Unicorn building for interviews. If this is not possible, a Zoom interview can be arranged.

Travel costs beyond the M25 will be reimbursed.

If you need this information in an alternative format, please contact jobs@unicorntheatre.com in the first instance.

The Unicorn Theatre is supported using public funding by Arts Council England.